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## REVIEWS.

*Imperialism: a Study.* By J. A. HOBSON. New York, James POTT & Co., 1902. — viii., 400, pp.

Mr. Hobson's study of the forces and motives of imperialism is not a piece of original investigation but an examination of the tendencies and principles, political and economic, underlying the present movement in world politics. While, therefore, no new material is adduced and while the principles considered are fairly familiar, the grouping of considerations is nevertheless very original and constitutes a most striking representation of the anti-imperialist position, supported by a telling array of arguments. Many new points of view are suggested and the significance and mutual relations of world-wide movements are explained.

Mr. Hobson begins by distinguishing imperialism from nationalism, internationalism and colonialism. He especially dwells upon the difference between colonial movements, through which the population of a nation expands over new territory, and the modern imperialism, in which there is very little displacement of population, and in which the attempt is made to establish political control for economic purposes. The economic basis of contemporary imperialism is the development of natural resources through investment rather than through commerce. The author holds that imperialism represents an *extensive* economic policy, and he believes that national energies would be better spent in the *intensive* culture of national resources. In this he holds the same view of the essence of civilizing activities as does Ratzenhofer — the constant improvement of the basis of economic life, as opposed to the mere seizing upon resources for the purpose of rapid exploitation (*Raubwirtschaft*). It must, however, be said that the great Austrian sociologist holds also that a civilizing policy is further characterized by the creation of a constantly increasing surplus over consumption. From this point of view the question would be whether a rational exploitation of the tropics by European capital would not produce a far greater surplus than a more intensive culture of European economic resources. Mr. Hobson holds, in Chapter VI, Part I, that it would be far better to effect a change in the distribution of wealth so as to enable the poorer classes to absorb the surplus wealth which is now seeking an outlet in foreign investment. It may be an open question

as to whether better social service could be obtained by distinctly improving the income of the working classes than by using the capital for the acquisition of tropical products; or in other words, whether society would benefit more by paying its working classes better than by purchasing products which the national territory cannot produce. The author admits that we need tropical products in ever-increasing quantities, and even that we are justified in politically directing the development of the tropics. In Chapter II, of Part II, he seems to abandon the argument of the sufficiency of mere intensive development of national resources. This apparent inconsistency does not, however, detract from the value of emphasizing the prime importance of intensive development and the danger of relying instead upon streams of wealth pouring in from dependent regions.

Politically, the author considers the most characteristic feature of modern imperialism to be that it is competitive, and that, while the various empires are avowedly executing a trust for civilization, they are, in fact, engaged in an intense competition for national wealth and power. This results in a serious set-back to the efforts to strengthen the feeling of common interests coextensive with humanity. The author seems to think that the economic basis of imperialism — the development of backward regions — would be justifiable were it not for the fact that a class of international capitalists who are impatient to make quick profits are pushing the European states into selfish and reckless action. The natural growth of economic interests is thus anticipated and the arts of diplomacy and politics are used to preempt fields for investment and to create an artificial control over wide territories which can be developed only very gradually. The two most serious consequences of this reckless haste to secure fields for investment are the threatened enslavement of the black race and the break-up of Oriental civilizations. The imperialists are unwilling to wait for the operation of the natural causes which are transforming the negro tribes of Africa into a working population. They advocate such means as taxation, destruction of tribal bonds, and the formation of artificial "locations" for the purpose of forcing the growth of a labor supply in Africa, to the ineffable injury of the black race. It admits of no doubt that the world is in danger of having to fight the slavery issue over again. It would seem that the expansion of national societies to a world-state basis is bringing with it a recrudescence of slavery in substance, though not in form, and that an attempt is being made to reduce the black race in Africa to absolute servile dependence upon white employers. As the imperialist movement in Africa shows a

great disregard of the rights of the natives, so in the Orient it has interfered most recklessly with long-established civilizations. Outside of the political order introduced by Britain into India, the author believes that the only consequence of Western interference in the Orient is the confusing of the social customs and ideals of the East and the ruining of Oriental art by the introduction of cheap processes of manufacture.

The author has carefully scrutinized the facts upon which his argument is based. It is a matter for regret that he did not develop more fully his evidence as to the existence of an international group of capitalists who mould public opinion and direct public action in order to be able to profit by the fluctuations of the stock market. These forces and manipulations deserve most careful and detailed study. A few minor points are subject to criticism. On page 307 the author seems to imply that Alexander the Great had actually established his *peace* throughout India; and the reference to the zemindary system on page 314 is misleading.

Mr. Hobson has effectively pointed out the most serious dangers inherent in imperialism, — a reckless exploitation threatening the natives and civilizations of dependent territories, and the creation of a parasite class — in fact, even of general parasitism in the European countries. His condemnation, though often caustic, is not extreme, and though his views are plainly colored by the especially reckless manifestation of imperialism which he himself witnessed in South Africa, his views must be taken account of in any constructive policy of the period. While he admits the theoretical justification of a sane imperialism, he seems to despair utterly of its realization as long as nations have no other judge but themselves in the execution of the "trust for civilization." By those who admit that imperialism is a natural and inevitable movement, everything that the author has said should be considered in an attempt to establish a true civilizing policy of colonial administration.

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*Städteverwaltung im römischen Kaiserreiche.* By W. LIEBENAM.

Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1900. — xii, 577 pp.

A hasty examination of this work would yield the impression that its field was narrower than its title; for not less than four-fifths of the volume is ostensibly devoted to municipal receipts and expenditures